



DENVER OPPORTUNITY YOUTH INITIATIVE



FIGURE 1. MAP OF THE OYF NETWORK IN 2022



Aspen Institute Forum for
Community Solutions

Our Commitment Locally

The Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative will be a cohesive catalyst for race-grounded youth and young adult led system change.

Together, we'll create the belonging, meaning-making, wellbeing, and purpose conditions where Opportunity Youth thrive and are connected to school and/or work.

Common Measures Data: Denver + Aurora

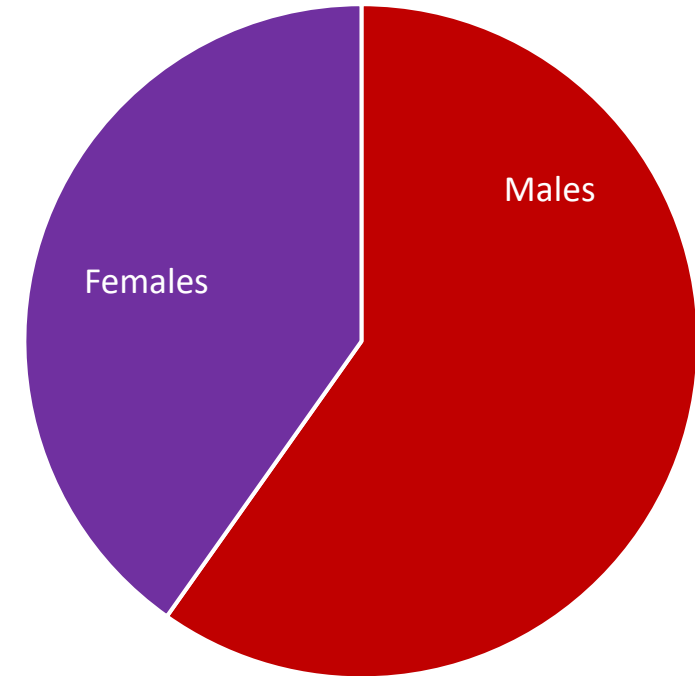
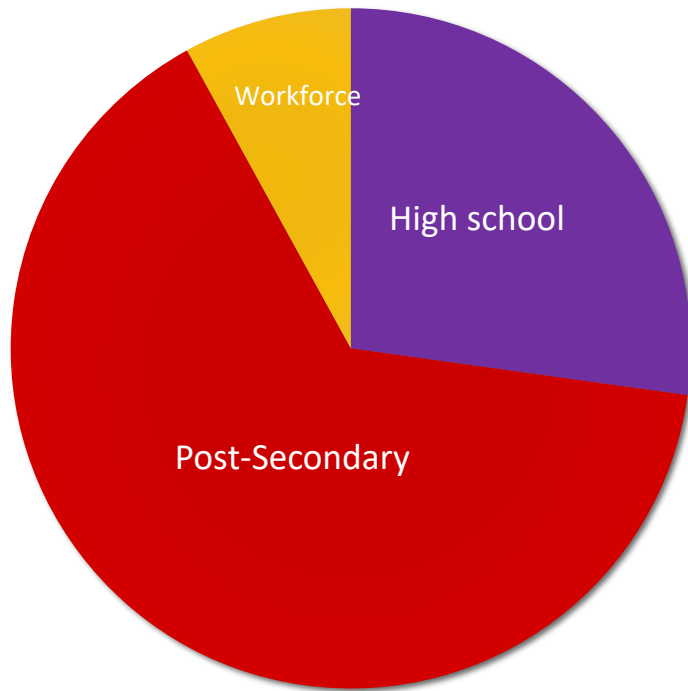
In 2022, nearly 10,000 young people were not connected to work or school.

- This represents 7% of all young people ages 16-24 (9,922 total).
- 63% of all young people who were disengaged were Latine, followed by 23% who were white, and 5% who were Black.
- Compared to the broader OY network, 20% more Latine young people are disconnected in Denver and Aurora than other cities.
- The disconnection rate in high school is almost 5x higher for youth identifying as males vs. females.

*Source: American Community Survey conducted by the Census

**Defined as young people with a high school degree or GED but without post-secondary degree AND who are not working and are not enrolled in post-secondary

Common Measures: Disconnection by Percent



Scaling Youth Outcomes Cohort: Goal 1

Increase collaboration and strengthen the measuring of outcomes for 16–24-year-olds in Denver and Aurora



Support youth of color to increase academic and career self-efficacy and racial identity



Implement Youth Mental Health Corps model to provide paid job experience and behavioral health credentialing



Increase engagement of justice-involved youth with educational support and job readiness training



By the end of year three, 4,165 youth will have a positive outcome related to:

- Connection to or completion of high school
- Connection to or completion of post-secondary or industry certification
- Connection to workforce

**Denver is one of four communities across the U.S. being supported by the Scaling Youth Outcomes grant.*

Scaling Youth Outcomes Cohort: Goal 1

Opportunities

1. Increase collaboration and strengthen the measuring of outcomes for 16–24-year-olds in Denver/Aurora
2. Support youth of color to increase academic and career self-efficacy and racial identity
 - Bring together CBOs who provide mentoring, career coaching, and post-secondary advisement to share tools/resources (211 and Willow Education) and embed BMWP best practices from onboarding to interventions to transitions
 - Build resources and partnerships that endure beyond staff turnover
3. Implement Youth Mental Health Corps model to provide paid job experience and behavioral health credentialing
 - Provide additional credential for second year members
 - Partner with Scaling Equitable Pathways core team to build out additional mental health pathways
 - Connect employers with members upon graduation
4. Increase engagement of justice-involved youth with educational support and job readiness training
 - Partner with CDE to build out hotline for justice-involved youth and infuse support beyond high school

Scaling Youth Outcomes Cohort: Goal 2

Provide a continuum of reenrollment services for youth who've dropped out and those who are highly mobile



Support youth who are behind in credits or chronically absent and therefore at risk of dropping out to increase school engagement and complete high school diplomas and GEDs



Increase post-secondary planning and guidance for young people to engage in meaningful careers in high demand sectors with a focus on Denver Pathways high schools



By the end of year three, 2,915 additional young people 16-24 will be:

- Connected to high school
- Enrolled in post-secondary
- Complete post-secondary (includes earning of industry credential)
- Connected to the workforce

**60% of youth served will be defined at Opportunity Youth*

Scaling Youth Outcomes Cohort: Goal 2

Opportunities

1. Provide a continuum of reenrollment services for youth who've dropped out and those who are highly mobile

- Explore more school options in Aurora
- Build post-secondary advising and support into reenrollment services to include work-based learning and industry credential opportunities
- Create stronger post-secondary advising and partnerships for GED programs

2. Support youth who are behind in credits or chronically absent and therefore at risk of dropping out to increase school engagement and complete high school diplomas and GEDs

3. Increase post-secondary planning and guidance for young people to engage in meaningful careers in high demand sectors with a focus on Denver Pathways high schools

- Look at other funding streams to boost number of post-secondary advisors for seniors with an additional year of post-graduation guidance
- Boost Work-Based Learning opportunities at Denver Pathways high schools
- Support narrative-change work about post-high school pathways

The Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative brought an additional \$750,000 into Colorado last year. *These dollars are supporting three nonprofit organizations, one social enterprise, and two school districts.*



Partners



Alignment with Other Coalitions

America's Promise
Alliance Non-
Degree Pathways
project

Colorado Career
Advising Network

Colorado
Workforce
Development
Council

Denver Workforce
Integration
Network (DWIN)

Scaling Equitable
Pathways in
Behavioral Health

Youth Justice
Collaborative